

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY : UNCLASSIFIED

TO : Department of State

FROM : LAGOS 239

REF : Consulate General's Despatch No. 217 of May 8, 1950

SUBJECT : Political and Economic Events in Nigeria for the Two-week Period Ending May 20, 1950

RDS ☐ or XLS ☐ EXT. PRIORITY MAIL POUCH
TS AUTH. REASON(S)

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Proposed British Consulate General at Brazzaville

Mr. W. I. BRINKWORTH, an official of the Nigerian Secretariat who is seconded to Libreville, Gabon, French West Africa, as Labor Officer with the local rank of Vice Consul, stated that the British Government expects to open soon a Consulate General at Brazzaville and that probably a Consul General will be in charge.

Proposed Visit of French Governor to Lagos

Mr. Brinkworth said that he had been asked by the French Governor of Gabon to arrange with the Nigerian Government for an official visit by the French official to Lagos in about a month to last for two or three days. He believed that the appropriate invitation shortly would be extended.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Visiting American Businessmen

Mr. P. M. MARKERT, representative of the International General Electric Company, Inc., (reference circular airgram of March 31, 1950, 8:15 a.m.) visited Lagos from May 8 to 11. Mr. Markert had talks with the Development Secretary and Deputy Financial Secretary among other things about Nigeria's reaction to Point Four assistance and reported great interest as to its possible use in this area. He also discussed Nigeria's plans for developing electric power with the Electrical Engineer-in-Chief; he left on May 11 for Duala.

Mr. Imanuel LANGER arrived in Lagos from Kano where for the past several weeks he has been endeavoring to establish a hides and skins exporting business. He requested the Consulate General's assistance in obtaining a temporary residence permit which he has obtained. Mr. Langer hopes to operate his own arsenicating tank in Kano and ship cattle hides and goat and sheep skins to the United States.

WQStanton/NHWilliams/HMNelli/moa

MAY 20 1950

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

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Nigerian Labor for Gabon

Mr. Brinkworth said that arrangements have been made for the recruitment in the Eastern Provinces of some 12,000 Nigerian laborers to go from Calabar to Libreville for work in Gabon on two-year contracts with optional renewal clauses. Each laborer may take with him one or two wives if he so desires, and it is expected many will do so. The operation is under an agreement between the Nigerian and French West African Governments and appropriate safeguards have been made to protect the workers' interests. It is expected they will be largely employed on plantations and in cutting timber particularly Ookoome which is reputed to be particularly suitable for plywood and is being shipped largely to Great Britain and Germany. As for the labor program, transport is the chief difficulty. Only a Spanish steamer used for shipping laborers to Fernando Po is available but its continued use is uncertain because the Spaniards want payment for fuel (coal) in sterling which the French cannot supply.

Textile Project Dropped Because of Political Uncertainties.

One of the Leventis Brothers which conducts one of the largest (independent) trading establishments in Nigeria (that is outside of the United Africa combine) said recently that his firm which imports large quantities of cotton gray goods from Japan, and also from the United Kingdom, recently considered the possibility of building its own converter plant in Nigeria to make white goods and prints but dropped the project when it learned that insurance against riots, civil disturbances, political uncertainties, confiscation, etc., would amount to about 15% of the sales volume.

Guinness Depot

Guinness Breweries have sent out a retired British Colonel (ex-Indian Army) to establish a depot at Lagos for direct distribution of their stout and other products with expected substantial savings and probable retail price reductions. They are doing a good business now and the demand by Africans is high but distribution costs to the many stores and bars in the interior are heavy.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On May 13th in an attempt to gain cooperation and a diminution in the hostility of attacks on the United States by the left-wing newspaper, the Labour Champion, the Public Affairs Officer called on the Managing Editor, Mr. F. O. EBUWA, who is the front for Nduka EZE, the real dictator of the paper's policy. In a return call on May 18th, Mr. Ebuwa clearly stated that

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distorted criticisms of the United States would cease. He said also that the United States has much to offer Nigeria and admitted that continued press attacks would alienate American sympathies.

PERSONNEL

123 Willard Quincy Stanton
Consul General STANTON returned from a short trip to the center of Nigeria (reference telegrams No. 47 of May 1, 1950 and No. 55 of May 12, 1950). The trip should have been much longer in distance and with more time at each center but the personnel situation here is too acute to permit extended stays away from Lagos (reference telegram No. 56 of May 13, 1950 regarding American personnel).

Willard Quincy Stanton
Willard Quincy Stanton
American Consul General

Copy to American Embassy, London.

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